

Substance Abuse

Quizzes

Families sometimes feel unsure about how to assess a loved one's problem. On the following pages you'll find three self-quizzes. They are designed to help you think about the possible chemical dependency of a loved one and how it has affected you. These quizzes are not scientific diagnostic tools. Some questions may carry more weight than others. They don't prove whether someone does or doesn't have a problem. You must rely on your discretion and common sense when evaluating the results.

These quizzes are *not* meant to be "evidence" to present to the chemically dependent person. ***Do not bring any of these quizzes to the alcoholic or addict as proof or confirmation of addiction.*** This would be an inappropriate way to address the problem and may cause angry and resentful reactions from the addict.

QUIZ: Are you troubled by someone's drinking?

The following questionnaire was designed by Al-Anon to help you decide whether Al-Anon is right for you. As you take this quiz, keep in mind that you may have been affected by a parent's drinking when you were a child. Although Al-Anon does not provide guidelines on how to evaluate your answers to this quiz, we suggest you attend Al-Anon if you answer "yes" to two or more questions.

- ☐ Do you worry about how much someone drinks?
- ☐ Do you have money problems because of someone else's drinking?
- ☐ Do you tell lies to cover up for some else's drinking?
- ☐ Do you feel if the drinker loved you, he or she would stop drinking to please you?
- ☐ Do you blame the drinker's behavior on his or her companions?
- ☐ Are plans frequently upset or canceled or meals delayed because of the drinker?
- ☐ Do you make threats, such as, "If you don't stop drinking, I'll leave you"?
- ☐ Do you secretly try to smell the drinker's breath?
- ☐ Are you afraid to upset someone for fear it will set off a drinking bout?
- ☐ Have you been hurt or embarrassed by a drinker's behavior?
- ☐ Are holidays and gatherings spoiled because of drinking?
- ☐ Have you considered calling the police for help, for fear of abuse?
- ☐ Do you search for hidden alcohol?
- ☐ Do you often ride in a car with a driver who has been drinking?
- ☐ Have you refused social invitations out of fear or anxiety?
- ☐ Do you sometimes feel like a failure when you think of the lengths you have gone to protect the drinker?
- ☐ Do you think that if the drinker stopped drinking, your other problems would be solved?
- ☐ Do you ever threaten to hurt yourself to scare the drinker?
- ☐ Do you feel angry, confused, or depressed most of the time?
- ☐ Do you feel there is no one who understands your problems?

QUIZ: Is a family member chemically dependent?

To determine whether or not an alcohol or drug problem is affecting your family, ask yourself the following questions:

- ☐ Does someone in your family undergo personality changes when he or she uses alcohol or other drugs?
- ☐ Are you sometimes anxious before holidays or social occasions because you are worried that he or she may disrupt it by getting high or drunk?
- ☐ Have you ever found it necessary to lie to employers, relatives, or friends to hide his or her alcohol or drug use?
- ☐ Have you ever hidden car keys, thrown out the alcohol or drugs, or used other methods to attempt to control his or her use?
- ☐ Have you ever felt embarrassed or felt the need to apologize for his or her actions?
- ☐ Have you ever asked him or her to stop or cut down on his or her use of alcohol or other drugs?
- ☐ Has he or she ever promised to stop or cut down on his or her use of alcohol or other drugs?
- ☐ Has he or she ever promised to stop using alcohol or other drugs without success?
- ☐ Has he or she ever failed to remember what occurred during a period of alcohol and/or drug use?
- ☐ Does he or she avoid social situations where alcohol and/or drugs will not be available?
- ☐ Does he or she have periods of remorse after periods of use and does he or she apologize for his or her behavior?
- ☐ Does he or she justify his or her use by blaming a stressful lifestyle or difficult emotional situations?
- ☐ Do other family members fear or avoid this person after he or she has been using alcohol or other drugs?
- ☐ Has another person expressed concern about his or her drinking or drug use?
- ☐ Has he or she ever made promises that he or she did not keep because of drinking or drug use?
- ☐ Has his or her reaction to a given amount of alcohol or other drugs changes?
- ☐ Does he or she deny a drinking problem because he or she drinks only wine or beer?
- ☐ Do you find yourself avoiding social situations that include alcohol or other drugs?

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, there is a possibility that someone in your family is developing a problem with alcohol or other drugs. If you answered "yes" to two or more, chemical use is probably causing serious problems in your family.

QUIZ: Signs of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse in Older People

The signs of alcoholism and drug addiction can be different in adults fifty-five years old and over than in younger people. They often drink alone at home so no one notices the severity of the problem. Many older adults are retired, so they don't have work-related problems due to their chemical dependency. They drive less, so there's less opportunity for them to get arrested for driving under the influence.

The following signs of an alcohol or other drug problem are typical in the older adult

- ☐ Prefers attending a lot of events where drinking is accepted, such as luncheons, "happy hours," and parties
- ☐ Drinks in solitary, hidden way
- ☐ Makes a ritual of having drinks before, with, or after dinner, and becomes annoyed when this ritual is disturbed
- ☐ Loses interest in activities and hobbies that used to bring pleasure
- ☐ Drinks in spite of warning labels on prescription drugs
- ☐ Always has bottles of tranquilizers on hand and takes them at the slightest sign of disturbance
- ☐ Is often intoxicated or slightly tipsy, and sometimes has slurred speech
- ☐ Disposes of large volumes of empty beer and liquor bottles and seems secretive about it
- ☐ Often has the smell of liquor on his or her breath or mouthwash to disguise it
- ☐ Is neglecting personal appearance and gaining or losing weight
- ☐ Complains of constant sleeplessness, loss of appetite, or chronic health complaints that seem to have no physical cause
- ☐ Has unexplained burns or bruises and tries to hide them
- ☐ Seems more depressed or hostile than usual
- ☐ Can't handle routine chores and paperwork without making mistakes
- ☐ Has irrational or undefined fears or delusions, or seems under unusual stress
- ☐ Seems to be losing his or her memory

Many of the symptoms listed above are attributed to other diseases or are considered part of the aging process. However, many older people find that once they achieve sobriety, these symptoms disappear.